

Creating An Extraordinary Life



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With Your Host

Natalie Bacon

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Welcome to the *Design Your Dream Life Podcast* where it's all about designing your life on your terms and now your host, Natalie Bacon.

We made it to the end of 2020. It is the last couple of days at the time this is coming out and I think there's no better time to talk about creating an extraordinary life. But before I do that, I want to catch up with you. How is it going? I want to give you some life updates.

I have to say that sometimes I grow so fast that it's times like these that I pause and really reflect and see all of the growth because that's just as fun, too, right? I think about this time last year and what a different place I was in and all of the results I've created in the last year and all of the ups and downs that have come with that.

Growing my team has been one of the biggest challenges for me in 2020. Really, what I mean by that is growing myself as a leader. Thank God for my coach, Kris Plachy, and the How to CEO program. I really transformed the way that I run my business. So, that's just kind of the latest for my own growth as I think back about this last quarter, this last half year really. So much change and growth and I feel like I really have a good foundation for how to run business operations and How to CEO and all that behind-the-scenes stuff. It's not just me running the show.

What else? I'm reflecting on my relationships, and thinking about Christmas and New Year's. I've always loved that in-between week from Christmas to New Year's. I really find a lot of joy in future focus and goal setting and growth. Really, we all do to an extent. You think about you wake up, you take a shower, you achieved something.

We are animals, organisms, beings who are just achievement and goal-oriented even if you don't necessarily think about it in that particular. If you're listening to this you probably do think about in that way, but it's really not just me, it's all of us. I think that this time of year, more than any other time, collectively we focus on what's next, what's upcoming and I just think 2020 is such a fascinating year to be at this time, at January.

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For me, I had a great year, really. I feel very, very blessed to say that, but I also like to decide that. I like to decide that where there were failures and where it was really hard, I used my resiliency. I like to think about how from my childhood not being the most stable I have really strengthened the skill of resiliency such that a lot of the things that happened in my adult life, and that includes 2020, I'm really able to say, "Okay, let's buckle down. Let's get through this without losing my mind."

So, I'm just sitting here reflecting on 2020 and I want to encourage you to do the same and to really rewrite that story. That's the work we did in Grow You this month, rewriting that story of your past because we all do it. We all are carrying our past into the future and if we don't look intentionally at that we're going to carry forward the past that we don't even want to carry forward. You might not realize that you're doing this.

That's been fun and I want to encourage you to do that as well. It's a perfect time to start thinking about this next year ahead. I do have an announcement. We are going to be opening up the Creator Program to 10 amazing women January 15th and 16th. So, if you are following along for online business and you want to make money in your online business head on over to nataliebacon.com/creator-program and you can learn more about it there.

Grow You, I want to give a shoutout to my Grow You members. I love you guys so much. This upcoming month we are going to be working on extraordinary goals and that is work I'm going to be doing alongside you. I created a new goal setting course that gets released here in a couple of days and it's going to be the foundation for the rest of the year. So much fun to be had goal setting. If you're not having fun don't do it.

I think that's it. What else? Okay, so today I actually wrote down my outline, handwrote it instead of typed it. I think I'm going to do an episode for you guys coming up on handwriting and really the exercise of writing and how powerful it is. I won't talk too much about it today, but we're going to see how this goes. I think it's going to be fun and something I might do more of versus the structured typing.

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All right. Today I want to talk with you about creating an extraordinary life. I'm really attracted to the word "extraordinary" right now. I even re-did the vision of our company. It used to be something else and now I've incorporated the word "extraordinary" in it. We are a company whose mission, whose vision is to inspire high-achieving women to live extraordinary lives. That resonates with me so much and so I want to talk with you about it so that you can really use this as a foundation and a framework for you in the future.

What does it mean? What does creating an extraordinary life mean? Have you taken the time to think about it? Because most of us are going around really attached to our current circumstances and our brain is telling us there's not enough time for this. So, we act like there's not enough time and we live that out. Even when we get a few hours of extra time, maybe a few minutes, we end up using it in a way that isn't serving us because we haven't decided ahead of time, "Okay, next time I get some time I'm going to spend it writing, creating, thinking about what living extraordinarily really means to me."

I don't think we give ourselves permission to feel that kind of joy. Like, what would it be like if you wrote down, "I'm living an extraordinary life. Here's what an extraordinary life means to me." It's going to be different for everyone, but that said I did come up with some of the components that I believe are required to really live extraordinarily and I think they're broad enough where you're going to see that everyone can use this framework.

So, the first component is healthy relationships. If you grew up in a home without parents who had a healthy relationship, and by healthy I just mean there was a sense of safety and that secure attachment. So, if you grew up in a home where you didn't have that, kind of like I did, my stress hormones were always activated and there's this sense of fight, flight, or freeze all the time.

You live from a place of lack and not enoughness and you're in that fight or flight scarcity mode all the time. That is true even when you are out of that home. So, as an adult it's so important that you identify if you're still

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carrying around those scarcity thought patterns that are manifesting in your relationships. I think the greatest accomplishment of my entire life is that I've been able to change that programming and really have healthy relationships in my life, a home that is safe and secure, and full of love.

It doesn't mean we're looking at each other kind of glowing 24/7, of course not, but it means we're giving each other that attention and we feel safe and secure and there's that secure attachment versus when you have a family with let's say an alcoholic, that's my example, and there's so much volatility in it where you don't have that sense of safety and security.

I think the baseline is having those healthy relationships. From there, from that place of being healthy in your relationships you can add on to it, you can make your relationships amazing, extraordinary. You can increase your connection. You can create friendships at every new phase in your life. How many of us have moved to different cities like I have and created friendships locally?

So, I have lots of friends in different states. One of the things I'm working on now is having more girlfriends in the city where I live. I love that. I think there's such value in that. Of course, 2020 kind of got in the way a little bit of that, in terms of going out and about, doing things, especially if you live in Chicago. But that's all right. I know that's something I'm going to be working on more in the future. Not just friendships, not just your romantic partner, your husband, your spouse, but what other relationships do you want to cultivate? And thinking about those really intentionally. Thinking, if you had extraordinary relationships what would your thoughts be?

Your thoughts would be something like, "I have the most extraordinary friends. I have the most amazing husband." It doesn't mean that you're doing this from a place of that toxic positivity where everything's just rainbows and daisies all the time and you expect it to all be perfect. It just means that you're choosing to believe that there is more good than bad. That you hit the lottery when it comes to people and relationships in your life.

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Of course, that means setting boundaries for those relationships that kind of don't fall into that category. So, we have healthy relationships is a must for living an extraordinary life. Second is having goals. Having goals that grow you. Having goals that your brain can focus on. Having goals that are for you and that match your deepest desires not that match what your parents dreamed for you or what your spouse or society dreams for you.

I think of an example of – let's say that you don't have a college education. If you want to get a college degree and that's a goal you want to make sure that you're doing it because you genuinely want that not because you are trying to earn that external validation. So, if you haven't listened to last week's episode on why your brain needs a goal, listen to that, but really having an extraordinary goal for you to be future-focused on versus creating more of the past is part of living an extraordinary life.

For those of you who, like me, are naturally really goal-oriented and you find so much joy in goal setting this is something that is so important for you, maybe a little bit more than some other people and that's okay too. You just want to make sure you're doing it and really liking your reason and loving the process along the way. I can't say enough about that. You want to make sure you're having fun and doing it to increase your experiences of life not to do it because you think happiness is over there.

I think about just in general how there's this culture of the goal is to be happy all of the time and what does that really mean? I have a philosophy minor so I'm just incredibly interested in philosophical questions like that and I think that's why I'm a life coach, but when it comes to happiness we want to make sure that we are not trying to be happy all of the time and how that would really be inauthentic. So, if the goal is more of a well-being and living extraordinarily what does that really mean? That's what I'm coming to you with today is with healthy relationships, we have goals.

Third is the ability to process emotions. This includes positive and negative emotions. Sometimes I don't even like to think of them as positive and negative because it carries with it something so negative when you say "negative." It implies that we shouldn't be feeling it. Sometimes I'll say open

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and closed emotions. Or expansive versus contracting emotions, but you get the idea. Every emotion only lasts 90 seconds. Isn't that fascinating? If you're feeling your emotions and you're resisting them and they're lasting for days it's because you keep creating the thought and you're trying to avoid the emotion.

Part of living extraordinarily is learning how to lean in to those emotions. Our negative emotions are so much bigger sometimes than our positive ones and so what we want to do is we want to notice the positive ones and give ourselves permission to feel joy knowing that, yes, we're going to have another problem and another negative emotion and that's just part of the human experience.

There is so much power and certainty knowing that you can feel any emotion. So, if you haven't done that emotional work, if feeling those contracting emotions, those negative emotions scares you or you are saying, "Okay, well, I like everything so far in this episode except for feeling those bad feelings." I just want you to pay attention to it and start to bring some awareness to it because the more you can embrace all of it the less negative the negative emotions seem. You start to not mind them as much. You're like, "Oh yeah, here's that feeling again. Here's that feeling of fear. It's okay." Instead of running from it and then piling on the emotion on top of the fear and resisting it and then it turns into who knows? Panic, anxiety, anger, all of those cover emotions.

So, you really want to learn, and it is a learned skill, how to feel the feelings and process those emotions. The fourth component of living an extraordinary life is to have meaning and purpose in what you do. Now, this does not mean we have to all go out and be Elon Musk or Michelle Obama or achieve in order to feel worthy. It's the opposite. It's actually feeling worthy ahead of time and deciding, "I am living my life with meaning and purpose. What I do is meaningful. I'm living out my purpose."

I coach a lot of moms and ironically, the moms who decide to stay at home and thought this is what they always wanted question it and vice-versa. Moms that go back to work question it and I find it so fascinating. Of

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course, I don't have children yet, but I think about how there is no right or wrong. It's not better to do one way or the other way. You get to decide what way is right for you and for your family and your meaning and your purpose is up to you. You might decide, "I want to stay home for the first five years and then I want to go back to work," or not. It's so up to you.

I just want to encourage you to have the confidence to know that you have that answer and that no one else does. Because when you live with purpose and intent and you choose meaning for your life you don't feel happy all the time, but you feel intentional. You feel like you're creating this extraordinary life. You feel like you're living it on purpose. That's really powerful and fulfilling and I would argue better than feeling the fleeting emotion of happiness which is amazing.

But we're not going to be walking around just happy all the time because if it was happy all the time would there even be happy? There'd be no contrast. We wouldn't know happy. Okay, I digress. Let's go to the fifth component of creating an extraordinary life.

The fifth component is your body, is your physical health. It's everything from the foods you eat to the movement that you do, so exercising, to actually how you dress and how you take care of your body. It's everything related to physical health. I do most of the mental and emotional health in life coaching, but there's an element of physical health as well because so much of our physical health is a manifestation of what we're thinking.

So, if we're thinking, "I need to eat the cookies to feel better," and we eat the cookies to feel better eventually we gain weight or we start to depend on the sugar highs and it is manifested outwardly physically. So, I love using thought work to help improve our body image, the way we think about food, the way we think about ourselves. It's like, what do you say to yourself when you look in the mirror? Do you just notice all of those imperfections or are you loving yourself and you're loving your body on purpose? I did that episode on body love. If you haven't listened to that go ahead and give that a listen.

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Number six component of living an extraordinary life is a clear mind and a clear heart. So, what this means is that you're self-coaching, you are managing your mind. You understand that you are not your thoughts and you choose your thoughts deliberately. It means that you regularly coach yourself. You regularly clean out your mind. You regularly manage your mind just like you would clean your house. It's such a good analogy or go to the gym.

You never stop exercising and you never stop eating healthy foods. You might change your exercise workouts or change the healthy foods, but it's a life-long practice. The same is true for your mind and your emotions. That's why I say a clear mind and a clear heart because every week it gets messy in there again just like the dust collects in the house. We got to clean it again. The same is true for your mind.

So, you want to have a practice of self-coaching, of mindset work. There is no greater work that I have done in my entire life that has enabled me to live an extraordinary life than mindset work, than thought work. Thought work is the foundation of everything, right? It's your brain.

The last element of living an extraordinary life is finding flow and engagement. This is something that I took from positive psychology and typically it's referenced with respect to work. So, when I think of the work that I do as a life coach I get in flow where I lose track of time entirely. My thoughts, my feelings, and my actions kind of merge into one and I genuinely have no concept of time at all. That's sort of what we mean when we think of flow.

But flow and engagement doesn't necessarily just apply to work, although just in our society we spend so much time working that I think if you're not in flow at all when you work keep looking for it because it's a lot of hours and a lot of your life spent if you don't spend any of it in flow. But we can also apply flow and engagement to your personal life and looking for that flow and practicing that flow.

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I have to say that when I first started my business, I did not feel like I was in flow. So, it is something that you can cultivate. I truly believe that. I never got into flow as an attorney. I think I could have. I really do. I think whatever you put your mind to and whatever you want to love and give attention to you can cultivate to that point of flow. I just think a lot of times when we are in a career that we decide we don't love it immediately stops any opportunity for us to get into flow with it and then we start looking for a different job.

So, think about this and also think about where you find the most joy. What I mean by that is not everyone has the same temperament when it comes to what brings them the most joy naturally. So, you might be someone who really feels so lit up when you are working and you get in that flow state and that's your joy. But to everyone else we might not identify that as happiness.

You might be someone who gets so much joy from the meaning and purpose that you have in your life or the goals or your relationships. So, just notice what type of temperament you have and give yourself permission to call that your own joy versus thinking that there's some level of unattainable happiness that you're supposed to be feeling in a different way.

I love that some of us naturally love to set crazy big goals and other of us want to set goals that stretch us, but they're totally different and to some would be on the smaller side. So, another way of saying this would be look inward for your own definition of what it means to live and create an extraordinary life.

So, I want to give you the list again of the seven elements. It's healthy relationships, goals and achievement, the ability to process all of your emotions, meaning and purpose, physical health and a healthy body, a clear mind and a clear heart – that's that mindset work, that self-coaching, the thought work, and flow and engagement. As you head into the next year or if you're listening to this sometime in the future, the next 12 months, I want you to assume that you have an extraordinary life, that your life is

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extraordinary already and write down what are you thinking if that were true.

If it were true that you had an extraordinary life what would you be thinking? I would be thinking things like, “I set and achieve extraordinary goals. I have the best relationships. I have the best friends. I have an amazing husband. I have an amazing family. My body always wants to heal. I love that my body tells me when something is wrong. I can feel any emotion and that is so powerful to me.

Sometimes my mind gets really messy and I love to practice thought work to clean it up. I love having a clear mind and the tools to clean it regularly. So, those are just some of the thoughts that came to me as I am thinking out loud here for you. When I think of, “Okay, what would I be thinking if I truly believed that my life was extraordinary?” I want you to do this exercise. I want you to write down what would you be thinking if you truly believed your life was extraordinary?

Also, be thinking in what areas that I mentioned today do you want to do more work in? Think of that as an opportunity to grow on purpose instead of what we tend to do is thinking something’s wrong with us and we need to be fixed or we’re damaged.

Remember, there’s no such thing as being damaged. This is just like enrolling in a new course or going to the next grade in school. It’s your new assignment for right now and life is the school we’re enrolled in and it never ends and that’s amazing, right? I love it. So much fun. All right, my friends, I will talk with you next week.

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